



NEWS RELEASE

NEBRASKA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (NEMA) – 1300 MILITARY ROAD – LINCOLN, NE 68508-1090

Joint Information Center (JIC)

Sept. 1 2012, 11 a.m. MDT

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Nebraska JIC Daily Update

Headline for Main Topic

The Wellnitz fire increased in size to an estimated 60,000 acres with 20 percent containment according to Incident Commander Jerry Kearns of the Rushville Volunteer Fire Department.

“We are making positive progress on the fire,” Kearns said. “Our focus today is strategic reinforcement of our fire lines around structures. We’re contacting every residence in the fire area to see what can be done to reinforce those lines around structures.”

Volunteer fire departments from outside the county are making a huge difference, Kearns said.

“We have had some phenomenal resources arrive and they have come from a long way off because all our mutual aid departments are already busy fighting the West Ash and Douthit fires. An Incident Management Team will begin arriving today to help control this fire. This is one of the bigger assets to bringing this fire under control.”

Thirty-four members of the Army Nebraska National Guard’s Chadron-based 1057th light/medium truck company arrived on scene Saturday morning. The intensively trained “red-card” crew is working on ground fire suppression.

Four Divisions, A, B, C and D have been established for managing the fire. Those division commanders are from the Hays Spring, Rushville and Gordon fire department.

Air Operations

- Chanook CH 47 and UH 72 Lakota from the Nebraska National Guard

Road Closures

- For up-to-to date road closures call www.511.nebraska.gov or call 511
- All State highways are open in the northern panhandle. Watch for fire fighters, smoke and wild fire .
- Smoke can rapidly reduce visibility.
- There may be intermittent road closures because of the response.

Safety Message

- Fire officials request that members of the public stay off county roads to keep them clear for firefighting efforts.

Evacuations:

- Evacuations were recommended for 50 households along Beaver Valley Road and the extension south of the South Dakota-Nebraska state line on Friday.

Weather Report

- High temp: 100 degrees, humidity 11 percent, winds, 16-19 mph. Smoke dispersal, excellent. No storms or precipitation are included in the forecast for the next several days.
- High and erratic winds and low humidity are hampering fire suppression.

Fire stats at a glance:

Start Date: Aug. 29, approximately 5 p.m.

Containment: 20 percent

Cause: Lightning

Acreage: 60,000

Personnel: 141 Firefighters

Cooperating Agencies: Sheridan County, State of Nebraska, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Nebraska National Guard, State Fire Marshal, Department of Roads and Department of Environmental Quality

Volunteer Fire Departments: 29 departments represented, with 141 personnel in the field.

Aviation : (1) National Guard LUH-77 and a local fixed aircraft

Engines: 32 Grass rigs, 11 water trucks, 3 tanker/tender units, 3 motor graders, two bulldozers, two four wheelers

Injuries: 3 minor firefighter injuries

Structures destroyed: 50-60 outbuildings destroyed, and approximately 10 home damaged. No confirmation on any homes destroyed.

Equipment issues: transmission failure in motor grader, blow out on fire engine tire.



List of County Emergency Managers